



AMERICA SUPPORTS YOU
FREEDOM WALK
September 11, 2007
PLANNING GUIDE

Concept

- To continue a national tradition to reflect on the lives lost on September 11, renew our commitment to freedom and the values of our country and to honor our veterans, past and present.
- Non-partisan/non-exclusive event open to the general public. This is not a fundraiser for any organization, nor a platform to discuss politics or policies.

Organization

The key to a successful Freedom Walk is to establish a strong committee of volunteers and to involve your local civic leaders.

- Walks may be developed and organized in each state by local leadership and volunteers.
- Work through your mayor's office to organize a broad-based committee.
- Funding should be provided by local businesses and organizations.
- Involve civic organizations (Rotary, American Legion, Knights of Columbus, VFW, etc.) and local America Supports You Homefront Groups. See www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil.
- Organize a volunteer committee to help with registration, set up and clean up.
- Plan a registration process – use sign up sheets, an email address or website.

Time and scope

- The date is Tuesday, September 11, 2007. You can set the time that is most convenient for your community.
- Identify the type of event that will work best for your community. You may want to plan a walk route in a prominent part of town or around a patriotic symbol.

Route

- Keep your walk route under two miles so the average person can participate.
- Obtain any necessary permits.

- Coordinate with local government and police for access to public property, crowd control, parking, logistics issues, etc.
- Coordinate with local emergency medical personnel for medical support for your event.

Outreach

It is important to involve as many different types of groups as possible to participate in the Freedom Walk. The walks are non-partisan, so be sure to make the invitation list as diverse as possible. Some groups you may want to invite are:

- People in your community who may have lost someone on 9-11.
- Members of the military and their families.
- Local elected officials.
- Local police and firefighters.
- School superintendents, principals and teachers.
- Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts.
- Local *America Supports You* Grassroots Groups. See www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil.
- Local radio and TV personalities and other local celebrities.
- Veterans groups (Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Paralyzed Veterans of America).

Promotion

Once you have developed the volunteer committee and received support from your mayor or local leadership, you should develop a promotion strategy to educate people about the opportunity to be involved in the Freedom Walk.

- Register your event at www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil - click on the “Freedom Walk” link, then select “Host Your Own Walk”. Follow the instructions to submit the time, location, and point of contact for your local event. This information will be posted on the webpage and will allow the public to search for an event in their area.
- Contact the Chamber of Commerce, convention and visitors bureau and City Hall to ask them to post the event on their calendars.
- Advertise how and where people can register.
- Contact local businesses and ask them to display flyers.
- Contact mass transit organizations for signage in bus stops, cabstands, train and subway stations, etc.
- Contact local employers and ask them to announce the event to their employees via email or by posting flyers or signage in the workplace.

Media

The support you need from the media is two-fold. First, you need the media to help you promote the Freedom Walk and registration sites. Second, you need the media to cover the Freedom Walk.

- If possible, recruit a local media sponsor to help you advertise.
- Reach out to local newspapers, television stations and radio stations to let them know about the event.
- Try to secure free public service announcements.
- Prepare a press advisory for the event and distribute to local media. You may download a template press advisory at www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil.
- Prepare a press release for the day of the event.

Budget

The costs for each Freedom Walk will vary. It is best to partner with companies for donations. Below is a sample list of basic expenses:

- T-shirts for walkers and volunteers.
- Advertising materials.
- Rental fees for equipment such as a microphone, stage and portable bathrooms.
- Permit fees.
- Water.
- Local promotion/publicity.

Collateral Materials

Most participants will want a keepsake from your Freedom Walk.

- Freedom Walk logos and designs are available on www.AmericaSupportsYou.mil.
- You can download artwork to take to your local vendor and provide T-shirts for the Freedom Walk.

Program

Items to consider:

- How will you recognize those people who were directly affected by 9-11, including anyone who has a connection to the victims of September 11, or military service members and their families?
- Who will you invite to speak?
- Who will be your master of ceremonies?
- Will you have a band or musical group perform patriotic music?

- Will you ask a chaplain, clergyman or minister to give an invocation?

Volunteer Support

Volunteers will be the key to your success. We recommend a lead and back-up volunteer for every assignment, and a team of support volunteers. Areas of responsibility:

- Liaison to the mayor's office.
- Finance officer.
- Promotions.
- Media liaison.
- VIP escorts.
- Set up and staff water distribution points.
- Set up and staff on-site registration desk and distribute T-shirts to participants.
- Give directions and information to participants.
- Clean up.

Clean-up

- Use volunteers to help clean up trash.
- Contact city sanitation for extra trashcans or dumpsters.
- Schedule a special trash pick up after the event.

Follow-up

- Send thank-you letters to sponsors, volunteers, and program participants.
- Send out photos and your Freedom Walk press release to local media outlets.
- Send photos and press clippings to America Supports You at the following address:
America Supports You Freedom Walk, C/O 1350 I St. NW, Suite 200, Washington, D.C. 20005.
- Send final numbers of participants to: slinder@susandavis.com
- Keep track of all information to ease planning for next year.